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MAY 15, 2026 | VOLUME 17 | ISSUE 11

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page 9

VENDOR
NO. 560

MEET YOUR VENDOR: ANDREW WHITE

GROUNDCOVER 15

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

At the Ann Arbor District Library downtown's front Lobby Shop, Silky Grooves, shoppers will find affordable vintage clothing, vinyl records and other retro knick knacks.

Big steps for small business. page 5

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM

venmo

@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Vendors are the main contributors to the paper, and are compensated to write and report.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

International Network *of* Street Papers

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WAYS TO SUPPORT

1. **Buy the paper, read the paper.**
2. **Get the word out** — We rely on grassroots marketing. Talk to people about Groundcover and share us with your network.
3. **Volunteer** — You'll learn a lot about our vendors, the newspaper and your community. Interested in volunteering regularly? Fill out the form on our website.
4. **Advertise** your company, organization, event or resource — see rates below.
5. **Follow us on Facebook and Instagram** — promote our posts and share your favorite articles and vendor interactions.
6. **Donate items** — A seasonally appropiate list of items most needed at our office and on the street is available on our website. Drop off anytime we're open.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES for one month

Size	Black/White	Color	Dimensions (W x H in inches)
1/8	$110.00	$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5
1/6	$145.00	$200.00	5 X 4
1/4	$200.00	$265.00	5 X 6.25
1/2	$375.00	$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
full page	$650.00	$900.00	10.25 X 13

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Three Months/Six Issues: **15%** off
Six Months/Twelve Issues: **25%** off
Full Year/Twenty six Issues: **35%** off
Only run for two weeks/one issue: **40%** off
Additional **20%** discount for money saving coupons

MEET YOUR VENDOR

Andrew White, vendor No. 560

In one sentence, who are you? Love me or hate me, I'm me.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover? Outside Cherry Republic, on the corner of Main and Liberty Streets.

When and why did you start selling Groundcover? In all honesty, I don't know when I started. The reason why is so I can have an income.

What is your favorite spot in Ann Arbor? Hanging out on State Street or the U-M Diag.

What words do you live by? Just keep 100.

What motivates you to work hard selling Groundcover? The ability to make money and to conversate with people.

What was your first job? I worked as a bagger at Kroger.

What's the best way to start the day? A cup of coffee and a morning smoke.

What is a small thing that makes your day better? When people actually talk to me when selling Groundcover.

What is your pet peeve? When someone forgets to give me back my lighter.

Earth Day reflections — so many lessons, so few listening

CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

Earth Day is a very important time to show respect for all that the sacred earth has given to humanity. This is not a religion; it's an homage to what has been giving the bounty of life we have on this planet. As a Native American I was honored to do a speech at the Earth Day event this year, 2026. What was hard to grasp was the fact we had a very small group of people in attendance. Each year the gathering for this sacred time is smaller and smaller.

As I look deep into the past we have many examples of humanity over-harvesting, taking too much and depleting the land. All one needs to do is go to places like parts of Africa. The greatest example is the Sahara Desert, once a vibrant tropical land with diverse animals. The people lived as we do now, with towns and cities. Other locations are the Middle East when Babylon was a vibrant diverse location with trees and land and water — yet now much of that location is dry and depleted. Madagascar was an amazing sustainable land with many trees and good land to grow, yet now it's all blown to the winds with sickness all around. We can then go to the great lands of India. In the northern provinces the dust makes it hard to breathe and nothing grows, yet only 100 years ago the land was thick with vegetation and people living in harmony. America suffered a massive dust bowl that created real suffering.

Mother Earth has a delicate balance and we forget this repeatedly. The winds of change happen fast! All the old nations and lands, they too felt invincible and full of freedom. Mother Earth gives freely yet we use unnatural chemicals to feed the world, creating chemical-resistant insects. Must we play out the warning of Atlantis? Do we not know the end of that story? Can we make real change for a better world in harmony with nature as organic farms do each and every day? Mother Earth provides the foraging lands for the humans with grains such as wild rice. Deer meat. Wild maple sap. Burdock and sorrel plants and ferns. Acorns and pine gum are some of the alternative foods we have in Michigan. Tribes have in the past been sustained exclusively by acorns, the one-stop shop tree. The Earth provides if we take a closer look at what is possible.

Real rejuvenation is coming to pass in areas of depletion such as China and the reforestation of their deserts and the re-grow projects across the world. In African countries, China and India, deserts are being reforested. This is truly essential for Mother Earth, for our own survival. Each and every one of us needs to pick a project and help with what we can. The seventh generation of your family will benefit from making a powerful choice right now, whether it's here in Michigan or across the world. Everything starts with commitment and determination. What we are doing in the long term is what matters for each of us in every way. It takes just one additional drop of water to create a flood or make a desert into a sea. Soft movements for real change, that is real honor to Mother Earth … She is waiting …

Kulema kungfu panda.

The "Mighty Mac"-kinac Bridge

SHELLEY DENEVE
Groundcover vendor No. 22

Did you ever wonder about the Mackinac Bridge being maintained? Who has the nerves of steel to do such a job? There have been many who braved the height of this phenomenon. Over 11,000 workers have worked on the project since construction began, with a high volume of daily workers on-site.

The bridge was designed to replace the ferry service connecting Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas. Construction began in May 1954 and was completed in 1957, opening to traffic on November 1, 1957. The five-mile structure took over three years to build at a cost of $99 million. It was designed by Dr. David B. Steinman.

Approximately 90 full-time, permanent, intermittent and seasonal staff members operate and maintain the "Mighty Mac." The team of employees include engineers, maintenance workers, painters, bridge inspectors (steeplejacks), mechanics, electricians, welders and toll booth staff. The staff maintains the structure 24/7, providing services such as towing, snow removal, and the bridge camera/radio communication systems. They also provide a driver-assistance program for individuals who are nervous about driving across the bridge.

Six workers lost their lives in connection with the Mackinac Bridge: five during its construction (1954–1957) and one during maintenance in 1997. The five construction fatalities included deaths from a scuba diving accident, a fall into a caisson, a drowning, and two from a fall from a temporary catwalk. Enough about that depressing information.

So when was the last time you crossed the bridge? For me it's been over 30 years, when I crossed on foot. I did the Labor Day walk on the bridge. We got up at three or so in the morning, drove to Mackinaw City and parked our vehicle. We got on a bus and we crossed the bridge to St. Ignace. Then we walked back to Mackinaw City. As we drove over the bridge to St. Ignace, we saw the sunrise — it was beautiful. As day broke we started walking the bridge. I was kind of apprehensive. Walking the bridge took a while. I don't remember how long it took, but I remember how beautiful the day was when we got back to Mackinaw City.

I look back now and think how brave I was. Right now I would probably freak out. I wish I could go visit it now just to see how nervous I would be going over it. You know it's a shame that I haven't been up there since then. It's only 4-5 hours away. My two kids had to see the bridge with other people; other unexpected life circumstances prevented my husband and I from going at the time.

Oh, I wanted to go and visit it but my husband at the time was too busy working two and three jobs, and drinking. The drinking was his life force. The jobs he worked barely kept us afloat. It makes me angry and sad that I let this happen. Maybe the fairly new car I purchased recently can get me there this summer. Right now I'm having trouble with this car and my mechanic can't seem to figure out what exactly is causing the problem. It seems like there is always something preventing me from doing what I would like to do. Walking the bridge again and silently thanking the workers is at the top of my list.

In loving memory of Donna Marie McGaughy

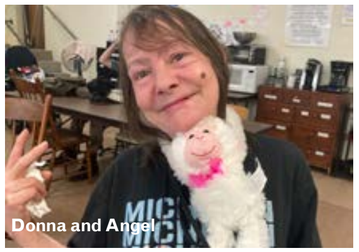
Donna Marie McGaughy, Groundcover vendor No. 310, passed away in April 2026.

We remember Donna as small but mighty, full of stories and songs. She was often found on 4th Ave, with Angel (her stuffed monkey) enjoying a cigarette or selling Groundcover News.

"No matter what was going on in the day, Donna was always happy — even if she was actually sad. She loved everybody and always had a smile on her face. She was a kind-hearted, caring person. I called her 'Little Bit.'"
— Cindy Gere

She will be missed by the Groundcover News family, and her neighbors and friends at Courthouse Square in downtown Ann Arbor.

She is survived by her daughter.


Donna and Angel

If you don't know, now ya know!

I'm Donna & I have my sidekick Angel,
We're here to hang out
With my family
With the Groundcover sisters and brothers.
If you don't know anything about me,
just ask my girl Panda and she will let you know more about me
Groundcover has welcomed me & helped me a lot with financing.
I appreciate everything they do for Angel & me.
Just ask Panda about Angel & me
Because if you don't know,
Now ya know.

Originally published in the January 10, 2025 edition of Groundcover News

community **EVENTS**

CINETOPIA FILM FESTIVAL
Saturday, May 13-17, 5-7 p.m. Michigan Theater. *Cinetopia brings audiences and filmmakers together to celebrate bold cinema, independent voices and films you cannot see anywhere else. Experience a curated lineup designed by people who love film as much as you do. As one of Michigan's premier film festivals, Cinetopia brings together independent films, Michigan-made shorts and fresh voices from around the world. Every selection is chosen for originality, perspective and impact.* marquee-arts.org/cinetopia/

SPRING BAG SALE: FRIENDS OF THE ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY
Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.. Friends of the Ann Arbor District Library, 265 Parkland Plz.
Sale of used books, puzzles, CDs, and other items. $5 per bag.

HURON RIVER DAY
Saturday, May 16, noon–4 p.m Riverside Park, 1000 Canal St., near downtown Ann Arbor.
The afternoon festival will feature hands-on activities and games, live animals from Leslie Science & Nature Center, a kids' area with inflatables and face painting, a craft area, local eco-friendly exhibitor tables, food trucks and live entertainment. Noon: Festival opens; live music by Hullaballoo Band
1 p.m.: Belly dance performance and lesson by Karma Belly dance
2 p.m.: Live music by Margo Solomon teen band from Neutral Zone
3 p.m.: Alexander the Magician 4 p.m.: Festival concludes.

YPSI FLEA MARKET
Sunday, May 17, Ypsilanti Freighthouse, 100 Market Pl, Ypsi.
Show and sale of vintage items ranging from the early 1930s to the 1990s, featuring clothing, jewelry, furniture, records and more. Concessions. Free admission and parking.

REVOLUTIONARY FOOD GATHERING
Tuesday, May 19, 5-7 p.m. Ann Arbor Friends Meeting House. *Potluck and discussion to discover who we are in relationship to our food, the earth and each other. Hosted by Groundcover News and Purslane Commons.*

WOMEN'S WILDFLOWER WALK: ANN ARBOR PARKS AND RECREATION ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
Tuesday, May 19, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Scarlett-Mitchell Nature Area, Scarlett Middle School parking lot, 3300 Lorraine. *Adults age 18 and up invited to take a 1-mile hike to learn about and look for wildflowers. Free, preregistration required at* tinyurl.com/a2parksrec

POEMS FOR THE PEOPLE: CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF ANN ARBOR POETRY & COMMUNITY
Friday, May 22, 7-9 p.m. Pioneer High School Schrieber Auditorium, 610 W Stadium. *Poetry readings by 2025 National Book Award Winner Patricia Smith, along with Ross Gay, Hanif Abdurraqib, Shira Erlichman, Sarah Kay, and other local poets and youth poets in honor of the retirement of longtime PHS creative writing director, and award winning poet, Jeff Kass. Tickets $15; $5 for students of all kinds. Purchase in advance at* bit.ly/poemsforthepeople

THE ROAD HOME SCREENING
Thursday, May 28, 6 p.m. EMU Student Center, 900 Oakwood Street, Ypsilanti. *The Road Home is a documentary exploring mental health, housing insecurity and homelessness in Washtenaw County, highlighting community efforts and challenges. Local organizations face fragmented responses, funding cuts and limiting support. The film's goal is to unite stakeholders, raise awareness and inspire collective action to ensure compassionate, sustainable solutions. After the film finishes, there will be a 4-5 person panel of speakers and a moderator from various community organizations.*

DANCE INTO ACTION
Saturday, May 30, 4-8:30 p.m. hear.say brewing, 2350 W. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. *Presented by Pilar's Foundation. Uniting to benefit local immigrant families. Live music by Jive Colossus, Killer Diller, Backbeat Manifesto. Food and drink from Pilar's Tamales and hear.say brewing. Purchase tickets at pilarsfoundation.org or inside Pilar's Tamales.*

ANNUAL TASTE OF ANN ARBOR: MAIN STREET AREA ASSOCIATION
Sunday, May 31, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Main St. between William and Washington Streets. *A chance to taste entrees and desserts from more than 30 downtown restaurants and cafes. Also, kids' activities and live music TBA. Free admission. Food tickets, $1 each (items range from 1-6 tickets each).*

Submit an event to be featured in the next edition: submissions@groundcovernews.com

Left: **Wander + Gather storefront offers cards, stickers, calendars, mugs and more adorned with illustrations by owner Maia Hausler.** Right: **At Silky Grooves shoppers will find affordable vintage clothing, vinyl records and other retro knick knacks.**

Big steps for small business

HANIYAH SIDDIQUI
U-M student contributor

Walk into the downtown Ann Arbor District Library on any given afternoon and you might notice something unexpected tucked into the lobby. The faint crackle of a vinyl record. A full bouquet of fresh flowers. A handwoven textile draped across a display table. These are not decorations. They are small businesses run by real people who, until recently, had no affordable path to a storefront of their own.

The Ann Arbor District Library launched its Lobby Shops pilot program last summer, transforming three vacant suites into low-cost retail spaces after the Friends of the Library Bookshop relocated to Scio Township. Monthly rent is set at $250 for the largest suite and $100 for each of the smaller ones, rates that stand in sharp contrast to typical downtown prices, where commercial rents can reach several thousand dollars per month depending on location and size.

The demand reflected this gap. Sixty-three applicants competed for just three available spaces.

The businesses selected to inaugurate the program reflect a deliberate range of backgrounds and products. Silky Grooves, a vintage reseller that has operated since 2019 through festivals and pop-ups, now occupies the largest suite with its collection of records, retro clothing, toys, and collectibles. Co-owner Hannah Jacobsen described the opportunity as surreal, noting that a permanent downtown storefront had previously felt unattainable. Another suite was occupied by Gardens Within, which offers locally grown flowers, houseplants, and handmade pottery from regional artisans. The third space belonged to JFSMade, a collective supported by Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, featuring handcrafted goods created by refugee entrepreneurs who have historically relied on farmers markets and temporary venues. (See Editor's note below for times for the currrent participating shops.)

For JFSMade, the storefront represents more than a place to sell products. As Market Coordinator Mibrak Tewolde explained, the space serves as a bridge between refugee experiences and the Ann Arbor community, highlighting both cultural expression and economic resilience. That perspective underscores the broader significance of the program.

Groundcover News has consistently reported on the structural challenges that limit economic mobility, particularly for those operating on the margins. One of the most persistent barriers is access to affordable commercial space. While the Lobby Shops initiative does not resolve this issue entirely, it offers a tangible example of how public institutions can expand their role. A library, in this case — a library is not only a place for information but also a platform for opportunity.

At the same time, the program is not without its constraints. AADL representative Rich Retyi acknowledged that physical space is the primary limitation, noting that additional capacity would allow for more participants. The six-month tenancy model also places pressure on vendors to establish a customer base quickly before their term expires, which can make it difficult to build lasting customer relationships. Furthermore, the setting itself presents challenges. A library lobby does not function as a traditional retail corridor, and casual visitors may not always translate into consistent sales.

Public libraries have long served as access points for knowledge and resources, particularly for those who might otherwise be excluded. Extending that mission to include commercial opportunity represents a meaningful evolution. For vendors such as those involved in JFSMade, the value of a downtown presence extends beyond immediate revenue, offering visibility, credibility and a sense of belonging within the local economy.

The Lobby Shops can only operate during regular library hours, and are open to all visitors without the need for a library card. This accessibility reinforces the program's underlying principle of lowering barriers for both entrepreneurs and the community members they hope to reach.

In a city where access to commercial space is often determined by financial resources, the presence of these small businesses within a public library stands out. It creates a space where opportunity is not exclusively tied to wealth, but instead shared more openly. Whether the program expands will depend on what the library learns in the coming months. For now, three small businesses continue the quiet, persistent work that is entrepreneurship. They show up daily, present their work, and trust that the community will meet them there.

Silky Grooves Vintage & Vinyl *will be open until the end of May; shop Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 2-6 p.m. and Saturdays 2-6 p.m. IG: @silkygrooves*

Wander + Gather *is open Thursday and Friday 3-6 p.m., Sunday 12-4 p.m. IG: @wandergathershop*

True Timbuktu *will be open Saturdays and Sundays 1- 6 p.m. IG: @trutimbuku*

What's Happening at the Ann Arbor District Library

Open 10am–8pm Daily
Visit any of our five locations across town to browse books, magazines, newspapers, and more. Check out movies, CDs, art prints, musical instruments, or even home tools—you name it! Enjoy fast and free WiFi, study and meeting rooms, and plenty of comfortable spaces to relax or hang out.

Public Computers
The AADL has public-access Internet computers available for use by both cardholders and non-cardholders at all five locations. Each station has USB ports, headphone jacks, and some of the fastest WiFi speeds in town!

Byte Club
An exclusive club for AADL SUPER FANS and library people like you! Byte Club will help you connect deeper with the Library you know and love, and share special sneak peeks of new things coming soon. The first rule of Byte Club is that you tell everyone about Byte Club! Ready to join? Visit aadl.org/byteclub to get started.

FEATURED EVENT

Wednesday, June 3 • 11 AM–4 PM • Downtown Library
VISIONS features a variety of exhibitors demonstrating the latest products & services for the blind, low vision, & physically disabled. Enjoy presentations on topics related to vision health, services, & assistive technology. Learn more at aadl.org/visions.

U-M hospital is failing homeless patients

RACHAEL LANIER
Groundcover vendor No. 695

Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this article are of the author's own and not that of Groundcover News, as Lanier indicates.

University of Michigan Hospital has never given me, personally, any problems. The care I have received any time I've been there has been above average and well worth the visit. They knew I was homeless and didn't discriminate against me for anything … until I became an emergency contact for a friend. Then I learned that Officer Fransisco Holguin could use a few lessons in manners, and the hospital staff needs a lesson in Patient Affairs. Also, I have come across three individuals in the same situation that I am as unhoused persons, whose treatment borderlines neglect or abuse from U-M medical staff and security.

Jeannie J., a single mother of three, was admitted into U-M hospital for a lung infection in early April. Her caseworker lied about an available bed at the Delonis Center, stating Jeannie had a bed there and could be discharged. One call to the Center revealed this was a lie. Then she lied about the closure date of the Daytime Warming Center, stating it was April 15, Jeannie's discharge date, when it was in fact the 12th and had already closed. I was a patron of the warming center and can confirm it closed on the 12th. Her condition was treated by a doctor Michael Mashab (there might have been a last name of Keone), who felt her recovery was sufficient. He later discharged Jeannie on April 15, which Jeannie felt was too early, especially not having housing or a safe place to fully recover, thanks to the laziness of her caseworker. (There was another caseworker involved who tried to help, but her efforts didn't land the end result she was hoping for.) The doctor also threatened removal by security if she refused to leave.

Jeannie appealed the decision for discharge and was ultimately denied staying any longer without having to pay $3,500 per day. She left the hospital and met me back at the Delonis Center to discuss details of her visit. This sparked my interest in writing an article. We also discussed how she had been discharged to a Havenwyck Hospital in Pontiac before, where she was raped by another patient, but no one received consequences. The police took a report and something happened to the investigation; either it was completed and rendered inconclusive results or otherwise halted by local police. You will see why I included this hospital in another part of this article.

The next day, my friend Steve D. was assaulted in the early morning by a group of minors who had been going around pepper spraying people at random. He called for emergency assistance. The police took a report and caught up to the group of children and proceeded to inform Steve of his options. When he went to U-M for help, they cleaned his eyes (not very well), then they discharged him the same night and threatened removal by security if he didn't leave. There was no case work for housing or other resources. Caseworkers apparently are only employed at U-M for status and looks. I say the hospital didn't clean his eyes well enough because I myself met with him later that morning only to see an orange crust around both eyes and hear his complaints of soreness. I gave him some baby wipes and offered to put his story in this paper as more evidence that U-M is abusing or neglecting the unhoused. I think it's urgent to inform unhoused persons of the maltreatment at this hospital and offer suggestions for another facility that will maintain the practice of treating unhoused patients with dignity and respect.

I have another friend, we'll call her Lux, who had been off her psych medicine for three days and was starting to regress. Her symptoms were hallucinations, audio and visual, and tremors, all from a brain injury she incurred as a child. She drove both of us to U-M hospital where I, at her request, signed her into the Psychiatric side of the Emergency Department, giving my information so I could be her emergency contact. I left feeling as if she would be cared for properly and a few days in the hospital would definitely help everything.

I got a call from her later stating the hospital was going to transfer her to another psych ward outside of Ann Arbor, against her wishes, and that she wanted me to come up there and discuss options. While I was at the hospital, I was promised a chance to speak to Lux, which was ultimately changed to speaking to a caseworker, which ultimately led to Mr. Security Officer Fransisco Holguin telling me to leave because I had no reason to be there. He stated that Lux was a grown woman and that she could call me when she got where she was going. Even though I told him I was Lux's emergency contact and Lux was still on property and I wanted to speak with someone to keep them from "trafficking" her to another county, I was not allowed to know where she was going to be transferred. I got Holguin's name and ended up leaving.

I called U-M Patient Relations and spoke to a house manager whose name I didn't quite hear, and explained that Lux had a support system here, that she only needed her psych meds refilled, and that sending her away from Ann Arbor meant she wouldn't be able to come back for her car or any of her friends. Being unhoused means when you find people who don't take advantage of you, those people become friends. I was promised a call back and never received one. This goes back to a lack of accountability because: who will ever know? She was homeless anyway.

Lux was transferred to Havenwyck in Pontiac, the same facility I mentioned above that already had a history with Jeannie. Lux called me to let me know she had arrived and that a caseworker, Scott, would be assigned to her. Throughout her stay there, she was sexually assaulted by a male nurse while threatening her with an injection. She did report the assault, but who knows if that hospital would be doing any kind of investigating. Jeannie didn't get any justice, Lux will probably see the same result. She also requested help from the Easter Seals assistance organization, who never called me as her emergency contact to discuss her plan of discharge.

Her Havenwyck caseworker Scott called me only hours away from her discharge instead of making contact earlier in her stay at his facility, to plan her return to Ann Arbor. I didn't answer the call, so Havenwyck decided she would be discharged to a shelter in Oakland. Lux called me as soon as she was at the Hope Shelter and wanted help getting back to Ann Arbor. She stated the shelter staff were kind and professional but that area of Pontiac had a bad reputation and she was still fearful. I had been fortunate enough to have some money and a friend in Detroit who Ubers for a living. He went immediately to get her and she arrived in Ann Arbor around 9:30 that night. She came to the Delonis Center to get some gear out of storage and went to go get her car that was still parked at the hospital. U-M "trafficked" Lux to Oakland county with the knowledge she didn't readily have the means to return to Ann Arbor. It's almost as i U-M Hospital has an agenda to "rid" Ann Arbor of any and all unhoused persons. I make that statement on my own without any affiliation to Groundcover News, so if someone wants to sue, you come for me and me alone. I got you, darlin'.

Another friend of mine, who is also an unhoused person, is Robin N. She had a blister on her foot that burst, causing extreme pain. She hasn't had much luck finding shoes in her size, not good ones anyway, as the last pair she received were used and actually speculated to have caused the massive infection inside her foot. She had already been cleaning the site, as it wasn't her first blister. Only it kept getting worse from walking, and had begun to become more of a hole instead of just a popped blister. Days later, she had so much pain coming from her foot that she called an ambulance to take her to the U-M Emergency Department. They examined her foot and advised her to keep it clean, gave her some pain medicine similar to Ibuprofen, and discharged her the same night.

Some days later at the Delonis Center, all the while taking care of her sore foot as instructed, the pain became so intense that, with a little convincing from myself and another friend, she opted to call the ambulance again. She had already been wearing the other pair of used shoes for a few days at this point. When emergency services arrived, we asked our caseworkers to please instruct the drivers to take our friend to St. Joseph's (Trinity Health Ann Arbor Hospital in Ypsilanti) for treatment.

Discrimination, maltreatment, or more possibly neglect from medical staff at U-M would only make things worse at this point and we didn't want her to lose her foot. We all feared she would have been threatened with removal by security and she already couldn't walk anymore. We were already aware there was a history of U-M mistreating unhoused persons based on the real experiences already detailed in this article of people I know personally.

When she first arrived at St. Joseph's she was pulled into surgery as her foot was so infected. They had to fillet her foot open on the top to allow for drainage. It was debated whether or not she would lose her big toe. Thankfully, their treatment plan worked. She was treated for diabetes as well, so this could have ended badly for her if her concerns and pain had been dismissed or she were discharged the same day again. Her foot has been sewed up and she is expected to make a full recovery at a facility in Ann Arbor.

I have written this article as a cry for

see **HOSPITAL** next page ➡

The business of healthcare

DAVID MITCHELL
Groundcover vendor No. 661

There are many variables in the living equation for the formula of life. The solution to this formula is seen by the decisions we make that determine how we live our lives. Some of us just live life one day at a time in a passive state and make excuses for our poor decisions. Everywhere we go we witness the painful results in the lives of those who reside in a passive state of mind. This article is written to give hope to those who have a need for someone to come into their lives and walk beside them and gently guide them onto the road to a healthy lifestyle.

With great pleasure and pride let me introduce you to Mr. Daniel VanAsscche. I met Dan during the brutally harsh winter of 2025/26. I was living at the Robert J. Delonis Center where space was limited due to the overwhelming demand for a warm place to stay to avoid the life-threatening effects of being left out in the sub-zero temperatures that were all too common during our recent winter. My daily survival routine included visiting the warming centers that rotated throughout Washtenaw County. It was during one of those visits that I had the honor of meeting Dan.

I was charging my phone and warming up to coffee and an abundance of delicious food donated by countless organizations and individuals who went above and beyond to make sure that I was safe, clothed and fed with enough to make it through the day. You can only imagine how your health can suffer when you are living every day in survival mode. Then I looked up and noticed a new face in the crowd. This unassuming man simply sat quietly among us and blended in and was welcome. During my walk to the free clothing closet I went past his table and introduced myself.

We shook hands, then we sat together and enjoyed a cup of coffee and a life-changing conversation. Of course we talked about sports and the news of the day, you know, just anything to pass the time. Then our conversation elevated when we touched on topics directed to healthy living and how to make the transition from homelessness to living healthy, wealthy and wise. First things first, in order to be wealthy and wise, you have to be healthy. Then, like magic, we got down to business, and for the next half hour we exchanged information that led me to take aggressive action to improve my health and live a better life.

Here's a little more about Dan. Born in Wyandotte, Mich., and raised in Taylor, Dan is a home-grown Metro Detroiter who grew up with all the toughness and strength that comes with living in the Motor City. Dan said, "I was raised to live by the golden rule, do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Dan went on to say, "I was never the biggest or the fastest, but nobody will ever outwork me, and I will never quit." Dan grew into a man with the heart of a lion and a work ethic that compels him to put in long hours and sleepless nights to get the job done.

"After high school I applied to several colleges and landed at Eastern Michigan University." Dan added, "My initial interest was to study criminology with the goal of pursuing a career in law enforcement." While in Ypsilanti, Dan's thirst for knowledge continued to grow. "I found myself taking business courses at Washtenaw Community College, and that is where I discovered my gift for helping people through the application of business principles for healthy living." Dan soon found career success. "I was blessed to land a job at Quicken Loans, then Rocket Mortgage." Dan's love for people led him to perform as a top producer in underwriting.

Working in the mortgage industry Dan watched his hard work reap the fruit of providing housing for his clients throughout the region. "I learned at an early age that no one wins in business working alone." Dan went on to say, "All of my success came as a direct result of working together as part of a team. I believe success is measured by your ability to build healthy relationships by placing the needs of others before your own."

While our conversation led to a number of interpersonal discoveries, I found out that for the past five years Dan has focused his energy on building the business of the Diversity Insurance company. Dan told me, "My office is based in Saline, but my time and life are spent working among the people throughout the region." Dan is an expert in helping people pay for healthcare. "I'm licensed and certified to provide my clients a complete portfolio that covers all insurance." Dan takes the time to listen to and assess your needs. In the end you come away with a plan of action that is doable and affordable.

My 30-minute introductory conversation with Dan led to meetings throughout Washtenaw County where we participated in the mutual exchange of ideas and information all directed to improving my health and quality of life. I now have an affordable insurance provider that allows me to receive a thorough dental examination, complete physical examination, an optical exam, and my own primary care physician.

Talking with Dan literally changed my life. I just met with my primary care physician, Dr. Shahnoor Amin, MD, PhD, who attended The University of Illinois Medical School. Dr. Amin said, "Mr. Mitchell, you are in excellent health, just continue to exercise and manage your diet and you will be fine." Wow, what a difference a friendly conversation can make.

Now the warming centers are all closed for the season, but my new friend Daniel VanAsscche is open for a conversation about the business of healthcare. I strongly encourage you to call Dan directly at 734-502-8666, or reach out to him through email to dvanassche@diversityins.com. This will be a conversation worth having.

➡ **HOSPITAL** from last page

help among the collective of unhoused. Please help us alleviate our burden of medical maltreatment and neglect from U-M Hospital. As I stated before on my own, this hospital mistreats or neglects unhoused, IF they don't turn around and traffic them to random facilities outside of Ann Arbor. I look forward to seeing someone in court over this. I'm ready. I propose a petition to the city of Ann Arbor. Please allow funding for a medical facility for unhoused and low-income only. This city has multiple streams of resources for the unhoused, but no real solutions. NO housing without being allowed to remain homeless for up to two years per HAWC (Housing Access of Washtenaw County). (Editor's note: This seems to have improved lately, for many.) No jobs that pay a living wage or allow for one employee to work more than one job, because the companies demand loyalty and open availability, even though it's never enough hours.

Join us in asking that the city of Ann Arbor, or the county of Washtenaw itself, provide us with our own medical center. All the resources for this collective are here. We need a hospital with better-trained and more compassionate staff and security.

If that isn't an option, move all the resources to another part of Michigan, like Oakland County, since U-M wants to displace us there anyway. We could just go have our meals and shelters over there. We could get our clothes and used filthy shoes from over there. We could go and have our fake interviews from employers and ghost job postings from over there. Then your medical case workers won't have a job to do and your doctors and security staff can just show up and put forth any effort into their housed patients. Problem solved, right?

Or we could try to solve the problem here.

Civil rights law and weakening the Voting Rights Act

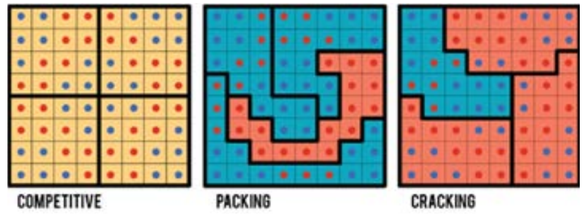
MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

In the process of creating social change, fundamental ideas are implemented through the arts, through journalism, through organizing and mobilizing efforts with vigorous action to achieve a great purpose. But, in The United States of America, one good way to solidify progress is to enter a court of law to present and plead one's case to make social change a reality.

Civil rights law consists of federal and state statutes, amendments to the Constitution and regulations designed to protect individuals from discrimination and guarantee equal treatment in areas like employment, housing, education and public accommodations. It enforces protections against discrimination based on characteristics such as race, color, sex, religion, national origin and disability.

Regarded as the legislative crown jewel of the civil rights era, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was enacted as a comprehensive tool meant to undo the political hold of Jim Crow policies in the South and related discriminatory structures nationwide. Congress adopted the law to ensure that states followed the 15th Amendment's guarantee that the right to vote not be denied because of race. The law fundamentally opened political opportunities for Black and brown communities to participate in all aspects of the political system on an equal basis.

Gerrymandering is the deliberate manipulation of electoral district boundaries to give one political party, incumbent, or group an unfair advantage. By using techniques like "packing" (concentrating opposition voters) and "cracking" (diluting them), map-drawers reduce competition, ensure predictable election outcomes, and distort representative democracy. Racial gerrymandering is illegal. The Voting Rights Act mandates that when a minority group is sufficiently large, geographically concentrated, and politically cohesive, a district must be drawn to allow them to elect candidates of their choice.



Gerrymandering uses the tactics of "packing" or "cracking" to give one political party an unfair advantage. Image from MIT Election Lab

April 29, 2026, the Supreme Court of the United States struck down a voting map in Louisiana, and with it dealt a blow to the landmark civil rights law. The decision opened the door for other states to redraw their congressional maps in ways that could affect elections for years to come.

The Supreme Court decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* significantly weakened Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act by shifting the standard from proving discriminatory effect to proving intentional discrimination, which is difficult to do. This makes it harder for voters to challenge racially gerrymandered maps. The ruling, as described by the American Civil Liberties Union, enables states to adopt maps that dilute the voting power of Black and minority communities.

I talked with a fellow Groundcover

see **VRA** next page ➡

Poor People's Campaign brings new life to MLK Jr.'s vision

LAURIE WECHTER
Former Groundcover Human Services Director

In 2017, National religious leaders, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II and the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis declared a National Call for Moral Revival of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign. King's movement was cut short by his murder 50 years ago. However, a 1968 initiative that King had planned to conduct was carried out this summer from May 14 to June 28. Thirty-five states participated in the 40 days of protests and direct actions.

Fifty years after King's death, 140 million Americans are poor or low-income and 43 million people are living below the poverty line, living with ecological devastation, systemic racism and an economy harnessed to seemingly endless war. The Poor People's Campaign now beckons our nation to take the higher ground. It calls upon our society to see the predicaments of the most vulnerable among us and seeks to halt the destruction of America's moral vision. The Campaign works to continue Dr. King's legacy of gathering citizens across the nation to take a stand on major issues affecting all Americans, but particularly poor people and people of color.

During the National 40 Days of Moral Action, hundreds of church and union members and concerned citizens marched singing songs, carrying signs and demanding a massive overhaul of the nation's voting rights laws, the implementation of new programs to lift up Americans living in poverty, increased attention to ecological devastation, and renewed measures to curb militarism and the war economy.

Among the protesters, 85 people — many of them leaders from temples, churches, synagogues and mosques — were arrested for trespassing. This amounted to blocking doors and parking lots of government buildings in Lansing, and stopping the Q-Line tram in Detroit. These acts have garnered media attention and have shown our neighbors that it is possible to have a voice in the public arena.

The Poor People's Campaign hopes to increase its ranks over time, just as the leaders of the Civil Rights movement did 50 years ago. At present, Campaign members are canvassing citizens to get out and vote — and to vote "Yes" on nonpartisan Proposal 2 in the November 6 midterm elections. Proposal 2 will stop the unfair practice of drawing voting district lines that empower one party and deny representation to a substantial number of poor and non-white voters (aka gerrymandering). Proposal 2 will establish a Citizens Redistricting Commission made up of four Democrats, four Republicans and five unaffiliated voters to redraw these lines and allow Michigan voters to be truly represented.

Please join the effort to create a more just Michigan and America for all!

To get involved, go to: www.poorpeoplescampaign.org or www.VotersNotPoliticians.com.

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Surrounded by robbers and thieves

KEN PARKS
Groundcover vendor No. 490

Most of us have keys to protect our homes and belongings. If you lose something, the first question you hear is "Did you have it locked up?" The implication is that if you did not then the loss is your fault. When my trike was stolen someone checked my "almost-lock" and undid it.

At 211 E. Davis, where I live in Avalon housing, if you leave anything in the dryer it can disappear. Most of my towels, smart wool socks, big comforter blanket and more have been taken. What is the problem here?

There is a bumper sticker that says, "Before the white man came there were no police or prisons, no unemployment, hunger or homelessness. The white man thought he could improve on that." In capitalist culture we are surrounded by a climate of shortage, even when there is an oversupply. How can we still believe this is reality-based?

The recent "Living with Treaties" conference at the University of Michigan explained how the treaty process was the main player in privatizing indigenous land. Privatization of public resources continues as the cult of wealth accumulation extends its reach into every nook and cranny. The investment class now talks of social security as an entitlement and how much better it would be if investors were in charge. Investors are the core of the ruling class and now practice neoliberal imperialism. Hedge funds and other techno-financial innovations show that financial capital is supreme over industrial capital and can thrive by destroying industrial capital. The working class elected Bill Clinton who then signed NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, which funneled investors to Mexico. In the global economy to maximize profits, China became the place of choice and jobs went from Mexico to China, joining the Apple I-phone and others in a profit frenzy. So, you can say that bosses are thieves who will sell your job to the lowest bidder.

"The Earth's Greatest Enemy" is a great documentary on the U.S. military and the damage they cause. In it you meet the people of Okinawa, the main U.S. military base in Japan, who protest the poisoning of their community. Of course this poisoning is made possible by the thieves who channel unbelievable amounts of tax money to the corporate arms of the war machine.

There is no way at this time to put a padlock on your income tax so it can prioritize people. There is a Move the Money coalition on this issue.

It may look like the power of the corporate state is invincible but a closer look shows that our labor power is the foundation of society. Please do a critical reading of "Preparing For a General Strike" and "Winning a General Strike," two of my many Groundcover News articles that help us face reality and choose the path of freedom. Earth Day 2026 had some good presentations on this theme. Ann Arbor Community Commons will continue many collaborations and extend it to Indivisible and the NO KINGS rallies.

Change and impermanence are in full play. Take a breath and look where you can do something good. Small things count. I hope the Ann Arbor Coalition Against War restarts the Friday evening vigils by the post office at Fifth Ave and Liberty soon. I will be there sooner or later. Come and greet Alan Haber with his sign "Abolish the Whole War System."

Picket line outside Ypsilanti Transit Center, in solidarity with theTransit Workers Union's ongoing bargaining with the AAATA, on May 1, International Workers' Day. Photo submitted.

Bosses and war go hand in hand to steal natural resources and labor power. The vast destruction of the environment happens as wage slavery carries out the orders of the ruling class. We have yet to learn how to use our labor responsibly. Compliance culture cannot allow this.

The Transit Workers Union (TWU) has been working without a contract for a month now. All of TheRide bus drivers and support staff are not allowed to go on strike by Federal law. Negotiations are stalled as management wants to cut maternity leave benefits and not give a cost of living wage increase. I lost my Gold Card which gives seniors free rides on the AAATA, and when I went to replace it, I discovered the picket line at the main office on Industrial. Please support the TWU.

As we learn to take a natural breath and focus our awareness on reality we will discover new ways to live in solidarity with life itself. Let's breathe together from earth to sky and live fearlessly. The etymology of the word "conspire" means breathe together.

The Conspiracy to Save Lives was my first political work in Detroit beginning in 1969. It was a defense committee for the Berrigan brother priests and others who poured their blood on draft board files. They were charged with conspiracy to destroy government property.

Look around and listen to what speaks to you. Practice until we get it right!

The Common Good is a group inspired by the work of Peter Block. Some 120 people, including me, gathered in Cincinnati May 4-6 to share and learn about connecting and building the world we want to live in with the courage to care about ourselves and others, beginning in local neighborhoods and understanding that the future is local.

"Our future is local" is the slogan of Argus Farm Stop. Their popular coffee is locally processed and brewed. I meet some wonderful people there.

By appearances, we're surrounded by robbers and thieves. But if you look beyond appearances, we are surrounded by buddhas and bodhisattvas and every kind of holy being. We can learn to breathe together and move together.

➡ **VRA** from last page

board member and volunteer, Jacob Fallman, who is a lawyer for Sugar Law Center. Sugar Law's work seeks to amplify the voices of low income workers and their communities.

Jones: What made you get into civil rights law?

Fallman: It always made sense to be a lawyer for the people. When deciding what I wanted to be when I grew up, I decided I wanted to be a lawyer. Civil rights lawyers, I looked up to in our society because they are fighters and they represent the people.

Jones: What type of work do you do at Sugar Law?

Fallman: We seek to help in areas of unfair employment practices, inappropriate development deals, environmental harms, and a range of discriminatory corporate and government policies. I work in administrative law to make sure the government follows due process and respects people's rights when it comes to people getting their unemployment benefits.

Jones: What are your thoughts on the Supreme Court decision to strike down the Voting Rights Act and what do you think we as a nation can do to remedy and reverse this decision?

Fallman: The decision is heartbreaking, but in a lot of ways it was not surprising that the court took this step with a 6-3 conservative majority that put the nail in the coffin in the process of reversing hard-fought gains won during the civil rights era. We won the rights we enjoy today, that are being attacked right now, by being out in the streets, and willing to fight for our rights. Not just that, but people need to be informed about things that are going on around them. The decision that recently happened in the Supreme Court is from a lack of paying attention and from the capitalist forces around us. If we are to win back our rights or win better rights that we should have had long ago, we are going to need a big movement like those in the past, if not bigger, to put the powers that be in their place and assert people's power.

Jones: There is a Michigan constitutional amendment Proposal 2 (setting up the Independent Redistricting Commission) that removed the power of redistricting from legislators in 2018 and gave it to a citizen commission — will that still be in place after the SCOTUS ruling?

Fallman: Yes, that will still be in place for the foreseeable future and will continue to determine what legislative districts will look like here in Michigan. (See page 8 for more details.)

Invisible process: recovery in the harm reduction era

DAVID CRANE
Groundcover contributor

In Washtenaw County, compassion has become a public language. It appears in mission statements, grant proposals, awareness campaigns and policy discussions. We speak often about helping the vulnerable, reducing stigma and meeting people where they are.

Yet for many of us living inside that reality, another truth exists: people are still slipping through the cracks while the systems built to help them continue to expand.

I know because I am one of them.

I am approaching three years in recovery. I changed my habits, changed my thinking, and rebuilt my life through discipline, accountability and persistence. Anyone who has walked that road knows recovery is not a slogan or a single decision. It is daily work, often done quietly and without recognition.

That is why it can be difficult to watch progress become invisible.

Too often, our public conversation celebrates stabilization while overlooking transformation. If someone reduces harmful behavior, that can absolutely be a meaningful step forward. Harm reduction can save lives, reduce immediate danger and create opportunities for change.

But when survival becomes the highest goal, recovery risks becoming secondary.

The message many of us hear is this: staying in the cycle is understandable, but asking to be recognized for leaving it is inconvenient. Accountability is treated with suspicion. Standards are dismissed as judgment. Long-term change becomes less compelling than short-term crisis management.

That imbalance matters.

When communities focus only on managing emergencies, they can unintentionally create systems that sustain suffering more effectively than they solve it. Programs multiply. New initiatives launch. Careers advance. Funding grows. Yet many of the people these efforts are meant to help remain trapped in poverty, instability, addiction and despair year after year.

Meanwhile, those who have fought to rebuild their lives can feel unseen.

This is not an argument against harm reduction. Preventing overdose matters. Preserving life matters. Treating people with dignity matters.

But dignity should not end at survival.

Real dignity means believing people are capable of growth, responsibility, healing and independence. It means investing not only in keeping people alive today, but helping them build a life tomorrow. It means valuing treatment, sober housing, employment pathways, mentorship and leadership from people with sustained recovery experience.

Washtenaw County is filled with intelligent and compassionate people who want to help. But good intentions alone are not enough if visible homelessness rises, addiction persists, poverty deepens and hopelessness spreads. Those outcomes should prompt honest reflection, not automatic self-congratulation.

We need balance.

Support harm reduction, yes. But support recovery with equal seriousness. Measure success not only by crises managed, but by lives rebuilt. Ask whether programs are producing progress or simply preserving the need for themselves.

Most of all, stop overlooking the people who chose change.

There are many of us in this county. We may not fit the preferred narrative of permanent struggle. We may not be the loudest voices in the room. But we exist, and our lives are proof that transformation is possible.

A community that forgets how to recognize recovery may eventually forget how to create it.

Between abstinence and acceptance

LENA BUHL
Trott-War street paper

Courtesy of Trott-War, a street paper in Germany, INSP.ngo.

Many of those affected by addiction never seek help. The mental barrier is hard to overcome, and the journey to the door of the clinic is a long one. But there are places where this door is wide open; places where people listen and encourage each other with honesty, where nobody has to lie anymore. One of them is in Stuttgart — at the Blue Cross.

The first Blue Cross Society was founded in Geneva back in 1877. Eight years later, the movement arrived in Germany, where it celebrates its 140th anniversary this year. The founders took inspiration from the Red Cross and saw themselves as "stretcher-bearers venturing onto the battlefield of life to rescue the victims of alcoholism and the pub life." That is why they chose the cross as their symbol.

In the Anglo-Saxon world, the color blue has traditionally been associated with the temperance movement. The Blue Cross is now active in almost 50 countries worldwide.

Back in the 19th century, members were still required to sign a pledge of abstinence from alcohol. Nowadays, however, the aim is not necessarily to achieve abstinence, but rather to bring about a positive change in a person's substance use and psychosocial situation. The Blue Cross Centre in Stuttgart attempts to achieve this through addiction counseling, supported living services, self-help groups and activity groups.

Generally speaking, we describe a condition as an addiction when the craving for a particular behaviour or substance is so intense that it significantly disrupts the person's life. Addiction can manifest itself in various ways: through the use of substances such as alcohol, recreational drugs and medication, or through behaviours such as gambling, eating and media use.

However, the point at which people turn to the Blue Cross varies greatly. Some come after just a few months; others take 30 years. "The sooner, the better," emphasized Benjamin König, head of the Stuttgart office. Caregivers also receive support from the Blue Cross: in 2025, 15% of all those receiving counselling were relatives. Some people try to persuade their loved ones to seek counseling. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

König prefers not to speculate on the likelihood of a successful recovery from addiction: "Of course, the sooner you seek help, the easier it is," he admitted. "They say the first year or two are the hardest. And you're on your own at times. You have your self-help group and the addiction support center, but, unlike in clinics, there isn't a therapist you can call whenever you need. Those who still have a functioning support network around them simply have it much easier."

As well as therapy, it is the self-help groups in particular that give people strength. Self-help groups are associations without professional leadership, consisting exclusively of people affected by addiction. Although each group organizes its meetings slightly differently, they are all centered around the sharing of personal experiences and current challenges — it's about openly discussing what's on your mind, asking questions, getting advice and learning from others. This helps people to gain new perspectives and develop a greater awareness of certain issues.

At the same time, it helps people to keep their feet on the ground and avoid falling into the trap of complacency; it fosters awareness of the reality that addiction is a lifelong struggle, even after many years of sobriety.

There is a palpable sense of trust among the members of the Blue Cross group in Bad Cannstatt. Every Wednesday, they host a safe space where attendants can be heard, supported and encouraged, no matter where they are on their journey.

"It's as if I can finally recharge my batteries on Wednesdays, after they've been draining a little bit every day of the week," said one of the members. "I'm not really the whistling type, but I'm practically whistling all the way home this evening after our meeting."

The Blue Cross Center is not a facility that provides physical warmth, whether through its premises or its meals. Instead, what it aims to do as an addiction support service is to offer human warmth.

"Addiction is a highly stigmatized issue. Some people might be afraid that they'll come in here and learn that they're full of flaws, that they're doing everything wrong, and that they'll have to sit through a sanctimonious lecture before getting help," said König. "So, hopefully, they'll be pleasantly surprised by the warm welcome they receive.

"We all have the odd bad day, of course. But it's important to me that we convey a sense of calm. There are people who are very, very nervous and have sometimes taken years to come and seek help."

Even today, there is a lack of openness and acceptance in society when it comes to dealing with addiction. The term "inclusion" is commonly used in the field of support for disabled people — but it's a concept that should extend far beyond physical or mental impairments. It relates in equal part to people

see **ACCEPTANCE** next page ➡

More than a newspaper: how Groundcover vendors are rebuilding lives and community

JONATHAN GLASS
Groundcover contributor

When Bridget Gotham talks about Groundcover News, her excitement is immediate and contagious. "I meet new and amazing people every day," she said. "I wish I had started sooner."

For the past six months, Gotham has worked as a vendor for Groundcover News in Ann Arbor, selling newspapers throughout the community. What began as a leap of faith has become a source of stability, purpose, friendship and hope.

Now, she wants others to experience the same opportunity.

A job with freedom, dignity and purpose

Groundcover vendors purchase newspapers for 50 cents and sell them for $2 plus the occasional tip, keeping the difference. Many vendors develop loyal regular customers, and every conversation becomes a chance to connect with the community.

Gotham now sells around 100 papers each week.

"I love that I can work on my own schedule," she said. "It's the freedom of self-employment I like most."

But Groundcover offers more than income. Vendors and contributors gain work experience, professional references, community support, and access to local resources throughout Washtenaw County. Writers, poets, and community storytellers are also encouraged to contribute articles and creative work to the paper.

For many people facing housing insecurity, unemployment, mental health struggles, or major life transitions, Groundcover can become a pathway forward.

Before joining Groundcover, Gotham worked as a security officer. After being assaulted on the job, she left the field and spent a long period unemployed.

"It scared me," she said.

Family members helped support her while she searched for a new direction. A friend and fellow vendor, Mary, encouraged her to look into Groundcover, but it took time before Gotham felt ready to walk through the doors.

When she finally interviewed at Groundcover's office inside Bethlehem United Church of Christ, she found something unexpected: encouragement. "The process was welcoming and hope-inspiring," Gotham said.

Even with prior sales experience, she admitted the idea of working independently was intimidating at first. "I wasn't sure if I'd be good at this," she said. "But I tried, and I am good at this." That willingness to take a chance changed everything.

Opportunities beyond selling papers

Groundcover vendors are not only salespeople — they are journalists, poets, advocates, artists and community leaders. Many vendors contribute stories, essays or poetry to the newspaper and are compensated to do so. Contributors can also participate in "Groundcover Speaks," an audio storytelling project that allows writers to record their work for additional compensation.

For vendors balancing tight budgets, every opportunity matters.

Gotham herself has become increasingly active in the community. She now participates in outreach events and is helping build partnerships with organizations that support mental health and recovery services.

At a recent fundraising event hosted by Fresh Start Clubhouse Gotham gave tours, connected with guests, and sold newspapers — proudly representing Groundcover and the people behind it.

For anyone nervous about becoming a vendor, Gotham offers simple advice: "Hold up a paper and let people come to you." She says most people learn quickly. Success comes from consistency, kindness, and conversation.

Sometimes a person may not have the ability to pay. Sometimes they may be having a rough day. Gotham doesn't let rejection discourage her. "In those cases, I might give away a free paper," she said. "A lot of times that person becomes a regular after they see what we're doing." That spirit of patience and human connection is what makes Groundcover different.

Ask Gotham what Groundcover means to her now, and she answers without hesitation: "Friends. I'm always in good company with friends." For many vendors, Groundcover becomes more than work. It becomes community — a place where people support one another, rebuild confidence, and discover new purpose.

Bridget Gotham, vendor No. 674

Gotham says she would love to see more people join as vendors. "The more papers Groundcover sells, the more people it can help," she said. She also hopes to see expanded resources for people experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, and substance use disorder throughout the area.

Looking for a fresh start? Groundcover News is actively welcoming new vendors and contributors. No experience is necessary. If you enjoy meeting people, telling stories, writing, or simply want an opportunity to earn income while becoming part of a supportive community, Groundcover may be the place to begin again.

For people searching for purpose, community, and a chance to move forward, Groundcover is more than a newspaper.

It's a new beginning.

➡ **ACCEPTANCE** from last page

with mental health conditions, offenders, sex workers and those in need of housing.

Many of these people face exclusion, and this is precisely where greater acceptance and open-mindedness are needed. Experience shows that even small steps towards greater visibility are met with a great deal of prejudice: the Blue Cross Center's inquiries to restaurants and retailers regarding partnerships often go unanswered.

Finding somewhere to live is also virtually impossible, especially in cities like Stuttgart. The mere suggestion of setting up a houseshare for former addicts usually results in an immediate "no." One of the visitors from the Blue Cross group sums it up like this: he wouldn't "come out" as an alcoholic today; the fear of rejection is too great, and the social stigma too deep-rooted.

As another person put it: "When someone is diagnosed with cancer, they are met with compassion. When someone is experiencing addiction, they are met with judgement."

It is important that everyone is given a genuine opportunity — an opportunity in the labor market, in community life and in their local neighborhood. And that they are greeted with a smile on the street. After all, those struggling with addiction are not just fighting against a substance, but often against a society that is too quick to judge.

Translated from German via Translators Without Borders.

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 734-665-6149
Bethlehem-ucc.org facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2
Bethlehem Church is home of the Groundcover office
UNITED in Christ's love we live JUST
MAY 2026 EVENTS AT BETHLEHEM
Please visit the church website at:
www.bethlehem-ucc.org for the most up-to-date calendar and event information.
Jesus didn't turn people away. Neither do We. United Church of Christ
Sunday Worship Time
10:00 am In-person and via Live Stream

What does Ann Arbor have in common with the poet and novelist, Paul Laurence Dunbar?

CISSE LOVE
Groundcover contributor

I am truly honored to share with readers of Groundcover News about the historical significance the name Dunbar brings to Kerrytown. Before discussing the area's new asset, Dunbar Tower, let's visit the life and times of the poet and novelist Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906).

Dunbar is considered one of the first black poets to earn a living as an artist while establishing a national and international reputation. His 1899 published poem, "Sympathy," in the collection of "Lyrics of the Hearthside," is the first instance of the well-known lyric, "I know why the caged bird sings." Maya Angelou, who has openly given full credit to Paul Laurence Dunbar, is well-known by most people for this lyric in her poem "Caged Bird" (1983), in the collection "Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?"

Dunbar is an example of the American dreamer ... a descendant of parents who overcame the oppression of slavery with service and education. He was an exceptional student, the editor-in-chief of his school paper and the president of the literary society at Dayton Central High School. Segregation in the 1800s had obstacles and barriers that forced Dunbar into manual labor rather than attending college. Paul Laurence Dunbar pursued his writing as a poet and novelist and was able to earn a living through direct sales, partnerships and expanding into various forms of art. Dunbar's claim to fame is his writing style, which excellently paints pictures in English and dialect associated with enslaved Americans. After the personal loss of his wife, and illness, Dunbar passed away at the age of 33. The richness of his life cannot be summarized and justly captured in such a short paragraph. All over the country, you will find schools and centers like Ann Arbor's Dunbar Community Center.

At an earlier time in Ann Arbor history, the Dunbar Community Center, formerly located at 209 N. 4th Street, was the answer to surviving segregation. The center later expanded to 1009 N. Catherine Street where it could provide housing for laborers working for the University of Michigan. With the help of other community-centered partners, the Dunbar Community Center's name was changed to the Ann Arbor Community Center, and it still stands to this day, now at 625 N. Main Street. We commend them for providing valuable programming for children, supporting families with a clothing closet and emergency food, and more, inspired by the contributions of Paul Laurence Dunbar.

I must state that as a writer and new resident in Ann Arbor, I am dedicated to continuing the legacy of a meaningful presence and supporting the vulnerable in my community. I feel right at home and appropriately so in Dunbar Towers, the newest residential addition to Ann Arbor's landscape, recently built on the Catherine Street site that once housed the Dunbar Community Center.

If you have strolled down Catherine Street near 4th Avenue, you might have noticed the new maize-and-blue-adorned six-story building, and new faces about town. Ann Arbor Housing Commission has partnered with Avalon Housing to create something in Ann Arbor that is a first of its kind, providing project-based housing to artists and some of our most vulnerable community members. As someone who is presently a resident of Dunbar Towers, I can share transparently that this experience is life-changing. Dunbar Towers offers affordable housing to local artists, remaining true to its namesake, and at the same time it has removed some of our most vulnerable residents from harsh living conditions.

Residents and the community will be able to build and explore more art in suite L, adding wonderful opportunities to build community and experience creative expression. Both residents and local artists have adorned the building inside and out with beautiful murals and expressions of the iconic area of Kerrytown.

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Please be sure to visit the murals the next time you are out for a stroll near the Detroit Filling Station, No Thai or the Farmer's Market.

I hope your curiosity is piqued and your imagination even more so. I invite neighbors to embrace the people, bring your artistry to the community space, and please be kind to those new faces. Help them experience what it means to be in Ann Arbor, with the same midwestern kindness and strength we're known for as one of the nation's most educated cities. See you around town.

Gourmet on the Beach: A Tale of Three Rivers

MARIE
Groundcover contributor

Pass the Salt

I laid down on just the right spot
In the sand
Below the spitting mesquite.
Until my siesta was disrupted by a hiker passing by.

The man offered me a bottle of iced agua.
After the Kool satisfied the parch of the blazing summer sand,
I noticed a prick more gentle than a pear.

My shrink wrapped fruit salad
Once nested in stretched arms.
Was now the leftovers from a one eared groundskeeper.

The Marlboro men arrived
One eye on the fly,
And the other on a canoe.

A single pan between us,
As they served me as canapes.

The Sault

I parked rear end
Near the base of Bear Bridge.

As I peered into the water,
I caught the glint of a tag lodged deep into the fin.

I drudged up trees forming an apex lined with birch paper.

Dumb and Dumber rolled through in tandem,
While on their Bud Light tree decorating spree.

Raggedy Ann and Andy dropped by for their lost lure.
In its place were the ingredients for castiron peach cobbler.

A vet with six wounds enjoyed salmon corn cakes,
Sprinkled with shredded cheese and served with instant coffee,
Only recently pulled from the depths of cargo.

Rock Salt

She was captured near the banks of old fieldstone.
Sentenced to churning, spinning, bobbin, and cranking
While sitting upon a tuffit.

Within a view from the train of scary toys,
A derailed caboose exposed a tiny gem packed for the rapids.

High atop the newly named tower suite,
A double rainbow arched through the mist,
As it rose from the banks of the arboretum.

A pillow fight brought the need for another groundbreaking sight.
They rubbed two sticks together as they proofed fresh bread.
Then fell into the iris bed.

Woodstock

PEDRO CAMPOS
Groundcover vendor No. 652

Disregard destination
I follow my instincts
against the river
reaching higher ground
for a better perspective
breathe in, breathe out
I say to myself
the air gets rare and cold
a cloud passes by
obscuring my vision
sunset sunrise
I saw trouble, so I ran
urges to move on
breaking boundaries
grab my bag and leave
my honor with me
here I am
turning stones into stairs
leverage along the way
free as a bird
trails open as I walk
the bears and the bees
I'm going for
the honey sources
coyotes, eagles, snakes
my new gang now
I get around
what I understand
from experience
commit and persist
you shall prevail
sunset sunrise
there's a special joy
in being proud
of the Man
I've become
values shared in life
I climb the mountain
high enough to
fall deep into myself
suddenly, back to earth
keep it simple
sunset sunrise
Pure air, spring water
good conversations
some mystery
a little adrenaline
lots of adventures
nature's power
On river flow
Once again
I'm on my own
Sunset sunrise
silence is filled
by the living
sounds from the forest
not to fear
my near future
splashes ahead of me
refreshing waterfall
smoke rises
from my pipe
high on the mountain
sunset sunrise
later stars come out
followed by
my magnetic moon
yes, this all
belongs to me
that's who I am
It brings me joy
how blessed I am
I am here
everywhere I am
someone else
but same
cause I know
this is the closest
to God
I'll ever be
sunset sunrise
precious moments
better memories
for my self
learned my lessons
now give me time
mountain lion season
starting now

Beautiful Woman, Broken Heart

LA SHAWN COURTWRIGHT
Groundcover writer

I am a beautiful woman with a broken heart
Everyone I love and those who love me
Have been taken away from me
This is not how I ever imagined
My life would come to be

Shame especially on you Ronnie!!
You are very wicked
To torture our daughter
My baby
I can not have another child

How can you look at her
Look at yourself in the mirror
What you have done and continue to do
Is tortuous to both her and me

You lie and put me and my name down in the mud
While destroying me inside
And your own daughter, your flesh and blood

Yes, I am a beautiful woman still
With a broken heart

Not only you, but a whole lot of my family
That I was only good enough for
When and if they were in need
Now, I sit alone a lot now
I will never look at anyone else the same
you understand
This is way beyond anything fathomable to me
This is worse than any nightmare
I am living in a wake state of the most horrible things

Yet, I am a beautiful woman,
hoping to mend my broken heart
before it bleeds out
From all of the many, many,
continuous horrors beset on my precious babies and me

Yet, I'll never give up, I am a strong
BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, with a
BROKEN HEART

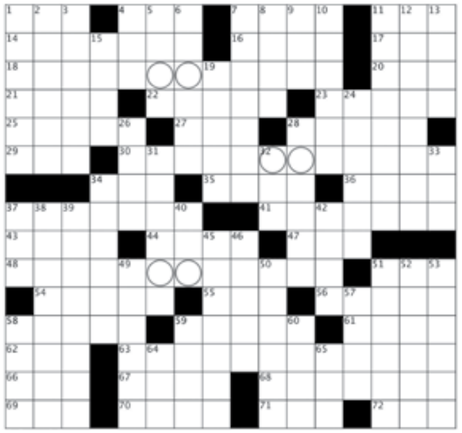
Beach

SHAWN SWOFFER
Groundcover vendor No. 574

As I walk along the beach I see seashells and sand dollars all over.
As the water rushes up to kiss my toes and my feet the sun is shining.
I feel the warmth of the day welcoming me to my morning.
I can hear and see seagulls flying overhead; in the distance there are dolphins swimming in their pods.

Beautiful on the Inside

Victor Schmitt



ACROSS
1. Trouble
4. Like some personalities
7. Eve's garden partner
11. Club relative, for short
14. The "I.V." of I.V.F
16. Pixar movie that takes place during the day of the dead
17. Put on
18. Certain inlaw
20. Place to get pampered
21. White of the U.F.C.
22. Île-de-France city
23. Full of back talk
25. Columns with a slant?
27. Filmmaker Spike
28. Word with pot or pork
29. Club ___ (resort chain)
30. Track and field event for Armand Duplantis
34. Dom's counterpart
35. Laura of "Jurassic Park"
36. At some point
37. Set one's sights, say
41. Most neat
43. "That's my cue!"
44. Earned
47. Chi-town airport code
48. One of around 250 in Sue—the most complete Tyrannosaurus rex fossil ever found
51. Compressed computer file extension
54. Bulls in a bullfight
55. Sign on some bathroom doors
56. Davis of "Thelma & Louise"
58. Colorful parrot
59. They might be peddled
61. "___ mate!" (Aussie greeting)
62. G.A. airport
63. Generous souls... or a hint to 18-, 30-, and 48-Across
66. Tee follower
67. Play start
68. Country on the Gulf of Finland
69. They're handed to bouncers
70. "Africa" band
71. "___ and Chicken" (90s Cartoon Network show)
72. Central

DOWN
1. It can be conventional or infinite
2. Like some books
3. Made flush
4. "___ be my pleasure!"
5. "Shoot!"
6. Compound pronoun contracted in the south
7. Accomplish, as a goal
8. Dippin' ___ (frozen ballpark treat)
9. One of the rockets in "pocket rockets"
10. Tasty tad
11. Low-pitched part of a song
12. Mouths along to a song
13. Airplane meal's platform
15. Apple tablet
19. One of the seven deadly sins
24. Tic Tac alternative
26. Tater
28. Toe affliction
31. First Family after the Bushes
32. It's in the eye of the beholder, in a saying
33. Fetch
34. Spanish title
37. Help
38. Aped
39. Fancy pieces of eyewear
40. Sigma follower
42. Remnant
45. Medical-themed nintendo game
46. Film critic Robert
49. "...and?!"
50. "Hold on..."
51. Equine hybrid with striped legs
52. Bad place to be caught
53. Biweekly date for many workers
57. Big name in frozen waffles
58. When doubled, a tropical fish
59. Unit on a light bulb
60. Meh
64. Green prefix
65. "Victory is mine!," in text speak

Sudoku ★★★★☆☆ 4puz.com

9	2				1			4
		5		9		6	8	
			5				1	
5		8					7	3
	3						4	
2	4					8		5
	5				8			
	9	3		2		5		
7			9				3	1

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS *May 1, 2026 edition*

employment RESOURCE CORNER

JOB DEVELOPER'S ALLIANCE
A collaborative of ten community organizations with the mission to help underserved job seekers find suitable employment. The clients are invited to two events per year to help connect them with employers. Washtenaw County agencies that are represented in the JDA: Ann Arbor Housing Commission, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Wash-tenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development, Department of Corrections - Women's Huron Valley, Jewish Family Services, Michigan Ability Partners, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Path For Ability Vocation Enterprise, Work Skills Corporation, and Washtenaw Community College Career Services
www.washtenaw.org/4497/Job-Developers-Alliance

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Office hours: Monday through Saturday 11a.m. - 3 p.m. New vendor orientations: Tuesday and Thursday 10 a.m.
A street newspaper which offers employment to people selling it: those experiencing homelessness or poverty.

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304 Harriet St., Ypsilanti
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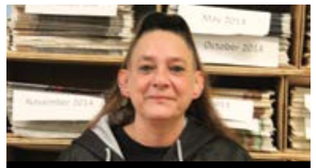
Mon.-Wed.-Fri.: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Tuesday: 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sat. and Sun.: Closed.
Resource room with computers, printers, and copiers; Unemployment pairing — once an active resume is on the state's website; Direct lines to the unemployment office; Workshops; Job fairs twice a month (first and third Thursday of the month); Helps to train entry level workers so they can move up in positions; Variety of adult programs (depending on needs and wants); Younger youth (14-17 years): out of school and in-school job options; Older youth (18-24 years): summer employment in partnership with U-M; Tuition assistance; Car repair and insurance assistance depending on the program; Work clothing; Mileage to get to|from work|school; Outreach programs: resume training for those exiting jail; Free background checks; Assistance with the $30 for GED classes — must be enrolled in a MI Works program.

WASHTENAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER
The team is available via phone at 734-249-5880, or email at entrepreneurship@wccnet.edu, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday - Friday except for holidays and closures. Explore their website at: www.wccnet.edu/succeed/entrepreneurship-center/index.php/
The Entrepreneurship Center at Washtenaw Community College is a welcoming resource hub that supports individuals in developing their entrepreneurial capacity. Through thoughtful conversations, partnerships, and programs, those at the college and in the surrounding communities are inspired and driven to actively grow their ventures as professionals, social innovators, or business owners.

Love like the weather



TERESA BASHAM
Groundcover vendor No. 570

Babe I wanna let ya kno,
Never gonna let cha go,
Therez alwayz gonna be a way,
Ya kno I'm alwayz gonna stay,
I love your touch,
I love ya so much,
Therez gonna be,
Upz & downz,
Joy & pain,
I'm alwayz gonna be around,
Through sunshine & rain,
I'm so in love wit you,
I kno youz in love wit me too,
I kno itz all good,
Therez nothing I wouldn't do,
Ta keep you close ta me,
This love that we found,
Izz so real,
I kno how we feel.

Want to lower the cost of your energy bills?

The Washtenaw County Weatherization Program has EXPANDED. Income guidelines have INCREASED. All work is FREE of charge!

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- Home Energy Inspection
- Air Sealing and Insulation
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- Fresh Air Bath Fan

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Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6
Income Limit 80% AMI	$70,500	$80,600	$90,650	$100,700	$108,800	$116,850

Apply today at washtenaw.org/weatherization or call (734) 544-3008!

Homeowners and renters can apply!

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415 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti
washtenaw.org/weatherization

Garlic broccolini

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:
2 bunches broccolini (about 1 pound total)
1 tablespoon olive oil
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1/2 cup water

Directions:

Rinse the broccolini under cool water and shake off the excess water. Trim about one inch off the bottom of the broccolini stems.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until it shimmers. Add the broccolini and sauté until the broccolini is bright green and some of the stems and tips of the florets are lightly charred, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic, salt, and red pepper flakes.

Continue to sauté until the garlic is fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the water, cover, and cook until the Broccolini is vibrant green and crisp-tender; this is about 1 to 2 minutes.

Serve broccolini immediately. A very easy, quick recipe.

Navigating new Michigan SNAP work requirements

LINDSAY CALKA
Publisher

On March 1, 2026 "HR1" took effect — and if you receive food stamps, you need to take action.

HR1, or "The Big, Beautiful Bill," installed new work requirements for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or food stamp) recipients in select counties in Michigan without high unemployment, including Washtenaw County. This is particularly important for parents of children 14 and older (before, work requirements only applied to parents of children over 18), and adults ages 18-64 — previously it was 55.

To satisfy the work requirements, SNAP recipients must work more than 80 hours monthly, or earn at least $580/monthly (calculated with federal minimum wage). Alternatively, SNAP recipients can volunteer for a certain number of hours — determined by dividing the value of their program group benefits by the Michigan minimum wage. You can be exempt from the work/volunteer requirement if you care for an incapacitated person or a child under age 6 (any person, not necessarily kin.) If you are already working or volunteering, you cannot quit or reduce your hours to maintain eligibility in another way.

Still, many are eligible for exemptions and deferrals, including those who are: pregnant; receiving unemployment or disability benefits (new application or appeals); physically or mentally disabled; attending a qualified (state-supported) training program half-time or more; American Indian or Alaskan Native (up to second descendant if living in Metro Detroit, verify through self-attestation); mentally/physically unfit for working (domestic violence, unhoused, substance use — verify through self-attestation and documentation) — or if the SNAP recipient is already complying with the work requirements for Family Independence Program.

If you were not aware of these changes, or have not reported any work or exemption since March 1, you will not lose benefits immediately — a person is allowed three months of not meeting the work requirements over three years. If you are concerned about maintaining access to food benefits, take action by updating your MIBridges profile and contacting your local MDHSS office.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
"If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me."
+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)
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